

Winter Driving Preparedness

Before you go, be prepared!

- Make sure your car is in good working condition, especially if you are taking long trips or are in areas that are not well traveled or inhabited. If you're not sure, have your mechanic check it over.
- Always keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze-up and in case of emergency.
- Make sure your car's heater and defrosters are in good working condition.
- Make sure windshield wipers are in good condition and washer reservoir remains filled with an antifreeze washer solution.
- Make sure tires are properly inflated.
- Never mix radial tires with other tires.
- Have a map available in the event that you would have to take an alternate route because of road closures.
- Leave an itinerary with someone and times that you will contact that person to verify your well being and current location.
- After a snow, clean off your vehicle COMPLETELY before you drive. Snow left on the hood can blow back and blind you. Snow left on your roof or trunk can blow back and blind someone else causing an accident. Clear the entire windshield so that you have good visibility. It is also important to remove snow and ice from the areas of the headlights, turn signals and break lights. During a storm, it may be necessary to stop periodically and clear these areas for safety.

It is recommended that the following items be kept in your vehicle in winter months in case of unforeseen emergencies:

- Tire chains
- Spare tire, lug wrench and jack
- Small amount of kitty litter, salt or sand.
- Small snow shovel
- Snow brush/windshield scraper
- Traction mats
- Flashlight
- Booster cables
- Blankets, extra clothing
- Warning device - Flares or triangles
- Small first aid kit
- Non-perishable food
- Cell phone *** REMEMBER *** even cell phones which do not have active service, are still able to dial 911. If you don't have a cell phone, try to locate a friend or family member that has changed service and no longer needs their old phone. Remember the phone's battery must be kept charged or it will be of no use in an emergency!

REMEMBER: A Virginia State Inspection is for SAFETY, not performance. Mechanics do not check all of your vehicle's systems during an inspection. Just because your car was inspected recently DOES NOT mean the vehicle doesn't have other problems, which can leave you stranded. If you have any questions, contact your mechanic.

The Madison County Sheriff's Office will be glad to accept any working cell phones with chargers that are no longer in use. These phones will be distributed to domestic violence victims and others in need.